



Ridgecrest Community Hospital

October 17, 1997

*Personally we care . . .
. . . Professionally we serve*

Ms. Andra Zach
Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
Health Policy and Planning Division
1600 9th Street, Room 350
Sacramento, California 95814


Dear Ms. Zach:

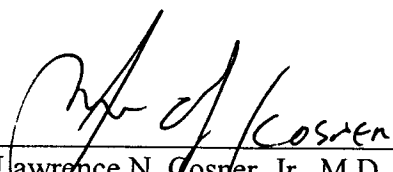
Please find this letter to be a reply to your recent request for input from the institutions participating in your "AMI Outcomes" study. Our institution, Ridgecrest Community Hospital (RCH) in Kern County, wishes to dispute your publication of our data, as currently represented, in the public compendium. Our concerns are virtually identical to those voiced in our letter of reply to your first publication, a letter dated 7/18/95.

During the study period, RCH established a relationship with an invasive center, as we had neither invasive cardiology nor cardiothoracic surgery at our small, rural hospital. Thus, following this date, we transferred all (potential) AMI patients to another center for admission. These patients were never "admitted" to our facility, and thus would not reflect on our statistics. The only patients we kept (admitted) were those too unstable to transfer, and as can be readily seen, the mortality rate of AMI patients too unstable for transfer would naturally be higher than the unselected AMI population. Evaluation of our institution, aside institutions without such a transfer policy, would be both unfair and misleading. For details of our in-house analysis of this issue, please see the aforementioned letter.

During your last publication cycle, we received no reply from your office regarding our concerns. Obviously, we feel that we have valid criticisms of your publication plans, and we would appreciate an appropriate change in your plans for publishing our data. Still, should you chose to again ignore our concerns, we would at least like the courtesy of a reply and our analysis as to why you have chosen to disregard the issues raised. As mentioned, we received no such courtesy two years ago.

Thank you in advance for your considerations on these matters.


David A. Mechtenberg
Chief Executive Officer


Lawrence N. Cosner, Jr., M.D.
Quality Improvement Committee Chair

zach.doc.sck

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